

With preceding

S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

Parish-Church of St James's Westminster.

On Tuesday November 7. 1710.

Being the

Day of THANKSGIVING

For the

S U C C E S S E S

Of the fore-going Campaign.

Printed at the Request of the Gentlemen of the Vestry
of the said Parish.

By *CLARK* SAMUEL CLARK, D. D. Rector of
St James's Westminster, and Chaplain in Or-
dinary to Her Majesty.

L O N D O N,

Printed by Will. Botham, for James Knapton, at
the Crown in St Paul's Church-Yard. 1710.

Price Three-Pence.

S E R M O N

Preached at the
Church of St James's Westminster
On Tuesday November 7. 1710.

DAY OF THANKSGIVING

THE CHURCH

OF THE FORT-GOOD COMPANY

By J. B. CLARK, D.D. Rector
of the Church of St James's Westminster

LONDON
Printed by W. Stollman, for J. Knapton, at
the Crown in St Dunstons Church-yard. 1710.

PSAL. CXLV. 2.

Every day will I bless thee, and I will
praise thy Name for ever and ever.

THE particular Occasion, upon
which this Psalm was composed,
is not known; But in general,
that it was occasioned by some extraor-
dinary Blessing, such as Success and Victo-
ry over powerful Enemies, or some other
like remarkable Interposition of Provi-
dence; is evident from the whole Course
of the Psalm. For the Author of it, be-
ginning with high Expressions of Joy and
Thankfulness, (v. 1.) *I will extoll thee,
O God my King, and will bless thy Name
for ever and ever; every day will I bless thee,
and I will praise thy Name for ever and ever;*
proceeds in the 4th Verse to declare, that
the Ground of this his Joy and Thankful-
ness, was some mighty Act; some publick
and eminent interposition of Providence in
his behalf: One generation, says he, shall
praise

praise thy Works to another, and shall declare thy mighty Acts; I will speak of the glorious Honour of thy Majesty, and of thy wondrous Works; and Men shall speak of the Might of thy terrible Acts, and I will declare thy Greatness: And ver. 11. They shall speak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power; to make known to the Sons of Men his mighty Acts, and the glorious Majesty of his Kingdom. After which he goes on, from the consideration of past Mercies, to infer the reasonableness of Mens depending upon the same Providence, for the continuance of his Protection in time to come; if by a religious Behaviour they approve themselves worthy of his Care and Favour. ver. 18. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all them that call upon him faithfully; he will fulfill the desire of them that fear him, he also will hear their Cry and will save them; the Lord preserveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will he Destroy. And then he concludes in the last Verse, with Expressions of Joy and Thanksgiving, as he began in the first; My Mouth shall speak the Praise of the Lord, and let all Flesh bless his holy Name for ever and ever.

on the Thanksgiving-Day. 5

The Application of this Discourse of the Psalmist, to our *present* Occasion ; is very obvious. God has done for *Us*, things no less wonderful and remarkable, than for the *Jews* of old ; and it becomes *Us* to praise him after the same Pattern, which the inspired Psalmist drew up for *their* Use. It becomes *Us every day* to give Thanks unto him, and to praise his Name for ever and ever. It concerns us to take heed that we behave ourselves worthily, upon the Mercies we have received ; that we be found in the Number of those that *love him*, and of those that *call upon him* in Faithfulness and Truth. And when *this* is our Case ; then it will become us with humble Confidence, to depend upon his Promise for further Protection ; that he who is *righteous in all his Ways*, and *holy in all his Works*, will continue to be *nigh unto us* ; to *preserve* and support us ; and be always ready, to hear and *fulfill the desire* of them that *fear and obey him*.

The Words of the Text, consist of two Parts ;

1st. A Declaration of that *Disposition of Mind*, which ought to be found in
such

such Persons, as have received great Mercies from God; And,

2dly. An account of the *outward Effects* of that pious Disposition, in Acts of publick Praise and Thanksgiving to God.

The former, is a grateful and due Sense of God's Goodness: The latter, is the *Fruit and Consequence* of that just Sense of things upon the Mind; showing forth it self in external Acts of Worship, and in calling upon others to join with us in *publishing* the Praises of him, whose Power is so conspicuous in all great Events, and whose *tender Mercies are over all his Works*.

But there is no need to insist separately upon each Part of this Distinction; because, though the things themselves are really *distinct*, yet they must always be supposed to *accompany* each other. For where the Mind is *inwardly* and deeply possessed with a just Sense of the Goodness of God, the *external Behaviour* cannot but of Necessity be answerable to the *inward Sense* and Disposition of the Mind: And where the *outward Actions*, are full of proper Expressions of Gratitude, and professed Acknowledgments of the Divine Good-

Goodness; though God only can *know* the Heart, yet Men must always charitably suppose, that the *inward Sense* and *Disposition* of the *Mind*, is agreeable to the Character of the *outward Action*. There is no need therefore for *Us* to distinguish, between *Thankfulness* as 'tis a Habit and Temper of the *Mind*, or as 'tis an *Expression* of that Temper in our *Behaviour and Actions*. For these things ought always to go together, as in sincere Persons they really do: And in the unsincere, where they do not, yet to the Eye of the World, which is all *We* can judge of, they must of Necessity appear to do so. *We* cannot therefore, but treat of these things as *Synonymous*; and, when we exhort Men to the Duty of *Thankfulness*, must always understand those *external Actions*, which are the *proper Expressions*, and ought always to be the *real Significations*, of a *grateful Mind*. Wherefore, without distinguishing between these two Branches, we may look upon the Text as one single Proposition; and take the latter Part, as only an Explication of the former: *Every day will I bless thee*; or, as it is in the Old Translation,

Translation, *Every day will I give Thanks unto thee, and praise thy Name for ever and ever.*

That which is more particularly remarkable in the Words ; is the Expression, *Every day* : As if *every day* of our Lives, were to be a day of Thanksgiving ; and our Expressions of Gratitude, as uninterrupted as our Breath. The meaning is ; that, as we are directed by the Apostle to *Pray without ceasing* ; and, by our Lord, to petition our Heavenly Father constantly for the continuance of our *daily Food* in acknowledgement of our perpetual Dependence upon Providence, for the very Breath we draw, and for the Bread we *daily eat* : so we ought to be as constantly and habitually Thankful to God for the Benefits *we have received*, as we are importunate in our Petitions to him for the Things *we want*. In every thing *giving Thanks* ; as St Paul expresses it 1 Thes. 5, 18 ; and Eph. 5, 20, *Giving Thanks always for all things unto God even the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

on the Thanksgiving-Day.

9

There are some things, in which we enjoy in common with all the Creatures of God; Life and Breath, and the common Protection and Preservation of Providence: And for these, we are to join in that great and universal Choir, which St John in his Vision so elegantly describes, Rev. 5, 13; and 4, 11; Every Creature which is in Heaven and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the Sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying; — Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory and Honour and Power; for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created. There are other Gifts, peculiar to Men; Understanding and Knowledge, Reason and the Use of Speech, a Capacity of Searching out and Meditating upon the Works of God: And for these Faculties, we are to express our Gratitude, by employing them in his Service; by promoting

B

inotting his Glory, and by so beha-
ving our selves in the exercise of
our Dominion over the inferiour
Creation, that *all the Works* of God
over which he has made *Man* the
Lord, may with *Our Tongues* praise
him, and magnifie him for ever.

There are other Blessings peculi-
ar to particular *Nations*: And for
these we are to glorify God, by a
particular Thankful Acknowledg-
ment, and by the proper Use of
such respective Blessings.

If the Providence of God has
planted us in a fruitful Country,
and his Goodness successively crowns
our Years with a perpetual Increase,
we are then to express our Thank-
fulness by Temperance and Sobriety,
by Charity and Works of Mercy to
the Poor, by taking great Care to
prevent Luxury and Debauchery,
Pride and Vanity, Sloth and For-
getfulness of God, which are the
Vices too apt to spring up out of

Prospe

on the Thanksgiving-Day. 11

Prosperity and Plenty: When thou hast eaten and art full, said Moses in his last and wise Exhortation to the Israelites; then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good Land which he hath given thee: Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his Commandments, and his Judgments and his Statutes, which I command thee this Day; lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly Houses, and dwelt therein; — and thy Silver and thy Gold — and all that thou hast, be multiplied; then thine Heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, &c. Dent. 8, 10.

If God has indued us with Learning and Wisdom, with Understanding and Knowledge, above other Nations of our Fellow-creatures; whom we are too apt to despise under the Name of Barbarians; tyrannizing over their Weakness, and insulting over their Ignorance; not

B 2 considering

Job 35,
11.

considering who it is that has taught
Any of us more than the Beasts of
the Field, and made us Wiser than the
Fowls of Heaven : The proper way
wherein our Gratitude should show
forth itself for these things ; is in
applying Learning to the Advan-
tage of Religion, and to the pro-
moting of the Glory of God in the
World ; by increasing real Know-
ledge, and not perplexing it with
imaginary Subtilties ; by discover-
ing Truth, and not colouring over
Errors ; by propagating what is
Certain, and not contending for di-
sputable Opinions.

If God has vouchsafed us the glo-
rious Light of the Gospel, and the
Knowledge of his Son our Saviour
Jesus Christ ; while many other
Nations lie yet in the Darkness of
Heathenism, and have not the
Knowledge of the Laws of God
The best and most acceptable Me-
thod of returning our Thanks for

so inestimable a Blessing ; is, that we endeavour to propagate the Christian Knowledge with Simplicity to Others ; and that we take care above all things to obey the Truth ourselves, in the Love and in the Purity thereof.

If God has not only placed us under the Light of the Gospel, but blessed us also yet further with greater Purity of Religion, by a Reformation from the grossest Errors and Idolatrous Superstitions, wherewith even the Christian World itself had been almost universally overspread, thro' the Corruption of that Mother of Harlots and A-
Revolutions of the Earth, which Rev. 17, 5. 14, 8. 18, 24.
hath made all Nations to drink of the Wine of her Fornication, and in whom is found the Blood of the Prophets and Saints and of all that are slain upon the Earth : If God, I say, has blessed us with a Reformation from these grossest of Corruptions

ruptions ; the most suitable Return of Thankfulness for such an Advantage, is to pursue the *Spirit* and *Design* of that Reformation ; and to take great Care, that we be not deluded insensibly to fall back again, and join in affinity with the people of these Abominations ; but that we stedfastly take more and more heed, without regard to any *Human Authority* whatsoever, and without calling any Man Father or Master upon Earth, to adhere to the Divine Authority of the *Scriptures* only, as the Adequate Rule of Faith and Manners ; which is the sole Foundation of the Protestant Religion, and the only effectual means of preventing all Differences among those who sincerely desire to understand and practise the Truth.

Ezra 9,
14.

Mat. 23,
9.

If

on the Thanksgiving-Day. 15

If God has preserved unto Us our
Lawful Liberties and Properties, un-
der a mild and well-constituted Go-
vernment; when almost all other
Nations upon Earth, are subject to
Arbitrary and illegal Dominion;
which is That Form of Government,
wherewith God threatned to punish
the *Israelites* for their Rebellion
against him, when he declared unto
them by the Prophet *Samuel* the
Manner of the King that should reign
over them: *1 Sam. 8,* Our Thankfulness for
the continuance of such a Blessing,
can by no other way be so properly
expressed, as by making it our chief
Care to use that Liberty which we
so justly boast of, and which we
have thought worth the defending
almost with infinite Blood and Trea-
sure, so as not to abuse it to Licen-
tiousness and Wantonness; to use
our Liberty so, as not to run into
the contrary extreme of Lawlessness
and Confusion; to use it so, as
not

not to break through the Obligations of regular Government and legal Restraints.

Lastly, If God has crowned all our other Blessings, with that which is the Security and Preservation of them all; a constant Series of unparallel'd Success, and Victories beyond Example great and complete, against the Potentest Enemy that ever yet attempted to inflave the World; *What shall we render unto the Lord for These his Benefits*, and what Returns shall we make him for such a Blessing as This? The Answer to this Question is of great importance; and the serious Consideration of it, that without which our Religious Assemblies would be but mere Hypocrisie, and our Prayers no better than a mocking of God.

1st Therefore, if we will make worthy Returns to God, for these his Benefits, in giving us such Victo-

ries

ries and Success; we must in the first place be careful to make ourselves truly sensible, from *what Hand* these Blessings do really come. We must be fully perswaded, that 'tis *God* that gives Victory in the Day of Battel, and that Success is owing to the Protection of the Almighty; that 'tis He that *breaketh the Bow, and knapeth the Spear in funder, and burneth the Chariots in the Fire.* That which is apt to deceive Men in this Matter, is their observing things to depend upon *Second Causes*, and to be brought about by the Operation of *Natural Agents*. But what are *Second Causes*, and what are *Natural Agents*, but mere *Instruments* in the Hand of Him who *ruleth over All*? All other things, excepting *Men* only who are *Free Agents*, have no pretense to be esteemed *Causes* in any Sense at all; but are merely as *Instruments* in the Hand of the Workman: And by these things, the Coun-

fels and Designs even of *Men* themselves, of the wisest Men and of the strongest Forces, are perpetually over-ruled to quite different Events, than they intended or could possibly foresee : So that the Issues of all great Actions, and the main Turns of all worldly Affairs, depend intirely upon such Accidents, as are wholly in the Hand of God to direct. Which Accidents, though they be indeed what we vulgarly call *Natural Causes*, yet this is really nothing else but an impropriety of Speech, to call That a *Cause*, which, being Unintelligent, is in Truth nothing more than an *Instrument* in the Hand of him who is truly the efficient Cause. And this is evidently the Case in all Unintelligent Natural Agents. Whatever *They* seem to effect, is not in reality done by *Them*, but by the *Providence of God*. That the Sun runs its Course every Day, is no less strictly

on the Thanksgiving-Day. 19

strictly and properly the Hand of God, than that it *stood still one Day*; nor is there any other Ground, why the *One* is by all Men readily ascribed to God, and *the other* they vulgarly fancy is done naturally without Him; but only this One foolish Reason, that what God does *once*, they see and acknowledge is done by *Him*; but what he does always, they therefore think 'tis not *He* does it *at all*. The Scripture, (and Reason also,) teaches us more justly, to *acknowledge God in all our Ways*; and to be sensible who it is, that being the Author and Director of Nature, and of all those Accidents which we can neither foresee nor prevent, does thereby dispose and order, as he pleases, the Events of all Humane Affairs. *There are many Devices in Mans Heart, but the Counsel of the Lord, That shall stand, Prov. 19,*

A Sermon Preach'd

adly. We must not only in a mere *Speculative* manner, be convinced that 'tis the Hand of God which bringeth about all great Events, and crowns us with Victory and Success ; but we must so consider it and meditate upon it in a *Practical* manner, as to be truly Thankful to him for the Advantages we reap thereby. The *Jews* in *Moses's* time *knew* very well who it was, that made them ride on the high places of the Earth, and——to suck Honey out of the Rock, and Oyl out of the flinty Rock ; who it was, that led them in the Wilderness like Sheep, and kept them as the Apple of his Eye ; that suffered no Man to do them wrong, but reprov'd even Kings for their sake : Yet even of these very Persons, who *knew* all these things so perfectly, and had seen them with their own Eyes ; did that Holy Man complain, *Dent. 32, 15*, that *Jeshurun* waxed fat and kicked ; that he for-

sook

on the Thanksgiving-Day. 21

look the God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation. King Hezekiah, knew very well who it was that gave him a Sign, and recovered him when he was sick unto Death, and delivered him out of the hand of the King of Babylon by a Miracle; Yet even of him, the Scripture complains, that he rendred not again, according ^{2 Chron.} to the Benefit done unto him; for his ^{32, 25.} Heart was lifted up; therefore there was Wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Even so We also, how well soever we apprehend in a Metaphysical and Speculative manner, that God is the Disposer of the Events of all Human Affairs; yet What are we the better, if it does not affect us Morally, in filling our Hearts with Gratitude, and our Mouths with Praises, and our Lives with Acts of Obedience to him, after all the great Things that he has done for us? This is the only

Job 22,
2.

only Return, that frail and dependent Creatures are capable of making, to the supreme Lord and Governour of all things : For our Goodness extendeth not to him ; neither can Man be profitable unto God ; as he that is wise, may be profitable unto himself. But Thankful and Obedient to him, we can be ; and most inexcusable and base is our Ingratitude, if his Mercies do not so affect us. Yet most prone is our corrupt Nature, to become thus forgetful of our supreme Benefactor ; And the very Frequency of great and unexpected Blessings, is itself to careless and profane Persons, an occasion of neglecting those things as common, which, if they had seldomer happened, would have been more carefully observed. In the Course of this great and bloody War, almost every Campaign has afforded us a much matter of Thanksgiving, as at other times the whole Series e-

on the Thanksgiving-Day. 23

ven of a successful War has been used to furnish : And for this very reason, because we have been obliged to return Thanks *so often*, Unthinking and careless persons have little or no Disposition to be truly Thankful and Devout *at all*. The proper Remedy against this Evil ; is to consider seriously and distinctly, what it is that we have hitherto been delivered from, by those Successes, for which we have so often and with so much reason been commanded to return publick Thanks. The War, wherein we are now engaged, seems to be the last Struggle for the *Two* things, which alone are valuable in human Life ; *Liberty*, and *Religion* : In opposition to *arbitrary Power*, which destroys all Property ; and in opposition to *human Authority and Infallibility*, sitting in the Seat of God, which is totally inconsistent with all true Religion. Had it pleased God

Rev. 14,
7.

God to permit our Enemies to have been as successful against Us, as we have hitherto been victorious over Them; we had long since been Slaves, deprived of all legal Right to our temporal Possessions; and for our Religion, had been worshipping Stocks and Stones, and Souls of Men departed, instead of Him that made the Heavens and the Earth and the Sea, and all things that are therein. Or, had Providence permitted us to have been deluded with the pretences of a false and deceitful Peace; the Effects of such an ill-grounded and insecure Agreement, might possibly have been much more fatal, than the continuance even of the bloodiest and most expensive War: And the growing Mischiefs of one disadvantageous Treaty, might have been more difficult to retrieve, than the transferring Miseries even of many unprosperous and unsuccessful Campaigns. For we have

have to deal with an Enemy, with whom no Peace is to be had longer, than we have Power to inforce it. An Enemy, whose Character is exactly given by the Prophet Daniel, ch. 8, v. 23; *A King of fierce countenance, — who shall destroy wonderfully; — and through his policy also he shall cause Craft to prosper, — and he shall magnifie himself in his Heart; and by Peace shall he destroy many.*

3dly. That our Thanksgiving may become truly acceptable; it must be accompanied with such Circumstances, and followed with such Behaviour, as may show the Words of our Mouths to be real Expressions of the Thoughts of our Hearts, and that our Praises proceed not out of feigned Lips. Our Joy must express itself, not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Frenzy and Debauchery; but in Praises and Thanksgivings accompanied with Sobriety and Pu-

D

rity,

rity, with Modesty and Humility; such as becomes those who mean to honour God with Piety and sincere Devotion in the practise of that Religion, the Preservation of which from being over-run with the Tyranny and Superstition of Popery, is one of the principal Grounds of our rejoicing for that Success wherewith God has hitherto blessed us. For it becomes us *Christians* to rejoice, not in *Ravage* and *Bloodshed*, not in the *Misery* and *Destruction* even of our *Enemies* themselves; It becomes us to rejoice, not upon the Increase of our *Power* for *Dominion's* Sake, not upon the enlarging our *Territories*, and aggrandizing the *Honor* of our *Arms*; but in being enabled to rescue the oppress'd *Liberties* of *Nations*; to restore the common *Rights* of *Human Nature*; and to secure that *Freedom of Religion*, in the denying of which consists the very *Essence* of *Antichristian Iniquity*.

Nations, after their Fashion, return their Thanks to the Almighty, for Victory and Success over their Enemies; And the greatest Tyrants and Oppressors of Mankind, pretend to praise God, whenever their Arms, by the Permission of Providence, and for the Punishment of the World, prevail over the Weakness of their neighbouring Nations: But these their *Thanksgivings* are *Profaneness*; and to presume to offer Praises to God, for the Increase of Power for Power's sake, and for the setting up *Arbitrary* and *Tyrannical Dominion*, is no better than affronting of God, and making a mockery of Religion. *Christians* are to desire, and to rejoice at the obtaining, such Victories only, as tend to establish the *Rights* and *Properties* of Mankind, and the common *Liberties* of Nations: And our Joy must express itself in such manner, and be attended with such consequent Behaviour, as

St James
3, 17.

is becoming the Purity of the Gospel of Christ. For, as the *Wisdom* which is from above, so the Joy also of those who are possess'd of that *Wisdom*, is *first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits*. It becomes us to rejoice for Success in *War* for no other Reason, but because 'tis the necessary and only Means of arriving at a safe and secure *Peace*. With which Blessing when it shall please God to complete and crown all our past Successes; then will it highly behove us to approve ourselves indeed the *Children of Peace*, by laying aside all those unchristian *Divisions and Animosities* among ourselves, which are kept up by mutual Accusations, full (as we may reasonably hope) of more *Uncharitableness* than *Truth*. The means of causing all which to be forgotten, is first to *unite* heartily in pursuing the Things wherein we all agree; and

then

then to wait with *Charity* in those wherein we differ, till even in these also *God* shall reveal the *Truth* unto us. Let us consider, that *Force* and *Violence*, without regard to *Right* and *Equity*, are the Means by which our *Adversaries* propagate their *Power*, and (as they are pleas'd to call it) their *Religion* also: For which Reason principally, their *Power* is a *Publick Enemy* to Mankind, and their *Religion* properly *Antichristian*. But *We* profess to make *War*, not for the Sake of *Conquest*, but only to obtain to our selves a secure *Peace*; And our *Religion* teaches us, as to desire the *publick*, so to maintain (as far as possible) *private Peace* also among ourselves; by mutual *Love*, *Charity* and *Good-Will*; as becomes those who profess the *Gospel of Peace*.

Let us therefore endeavour to understand rightly, the full *Nature* and *Design* of the *Religion* we profess:
Which

Which consists mainly in these Two Things ; 1st, That the *Scripture* (as I before observ'd) is the *only Rule* of our *Faith* ; which, if duly attended to, would speedily put an End to all *Differences* and *Contentions*, among those who mind what they mean when they make *that Profession* : And 2^{dly}, That the *Commandments of God* are infinitely of more Importance, than any *speculative Notions* or *Opinions* of Men ; Which thing, if seriously consider'd, would as effectually regulate our *Practises* in the Conduct of *Life*, as the adhering stedfastly to the only true Rule of Faith, would at once cut off all *Disputes* in the Matter of our *Belief*. Our *Lusts* and *Follies*, our *Debauchery* and *Profaneness*, our unreasonable and unchristian *Uncharitableness* and *Divisions* among ourselves ; are worse and more dangerous *Enemies*, than those we fight with *abroad* : And unless we speed

ly reform these Abuses, and cease to provoke God by the continu'd Corruption of our Manners; the same Divine Providence, which has hitherto wonderfully fought for us against the potentest Monarch that ever yet aim'd at the Empire of the World; can as easily, if he pleases, turn back our Successes speedily to our entire Destruction; and in a Moment bring upon us, after all our Victories, the very same *Event* as would have been the Effect of a continually unsuccessful *War*; at the time when we are just flattering ourselves with the Hopes of being put into secure Possession, of the Blessings of a safe and lasting *Peace*.

F I N I S.